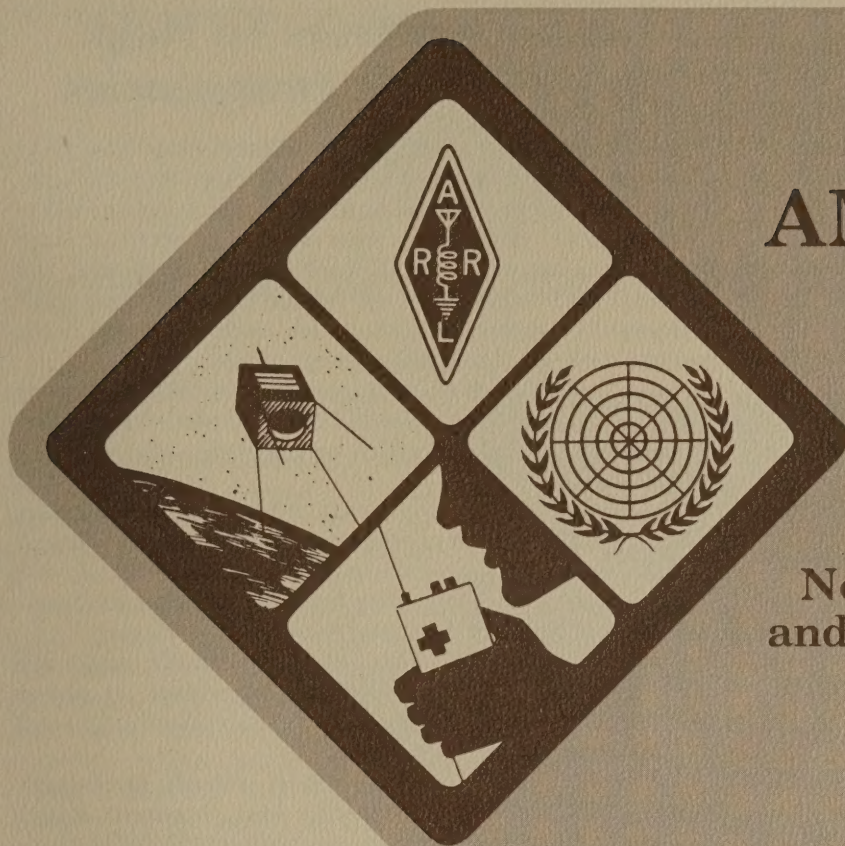




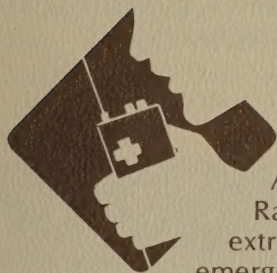
AMATEURADIO

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Amateur Radio Included In California Firefighting Plan

A program using Amateur Radio operators to provide extra communications during emergencies is being developed in Riverside County by the California Department of Forestry (CDF).

Amateur operators from across the country are being trained to provide backup communications for the state/county fire departments, according to County Fire Chief David Flake, who is also in charge of the CDF ranger unit in that county.

Thirty ham operators recently took part in training at the headquarters of two county fire departments intended to familiarize the volunteers with present state/county radio system methods of dispatching personnel and equipment.

During an emergency, Amateur Radio operators will provide a supplemental but independent communications system for the fire departments. One result will be that the more than 10 CDF and county communications channels will remain clear to handle emergency radio transmissions, Flake said.

Only amateur operators licensed by the Federal Communications Commission are being trained, Flake said. They are part of a statewide Volunteers in Prevention

program that is aimed at getting private citizens involved in firefighting projects, the chief said.

According to the plan, radio operators will be sent into the field to act as the "eyes and ears" of the fire departments, especially in areas where radio transmissions are locked out by mountains or hills.

During fires, flooding and earthquakes, the CDF plan calls for mobile ham radio units to be set up in such a way as to have direct-line communications with one another and, thereby, will be able to relay information from one point to another without interference.

Although the primary assignment of the volunteers will be handling such logistics as supplies and equipment, they also will serve as "our backup communications system, if for some reason our principal system fails," Flake said.

There are differences between the amateur and CDF communications systems. Principally, they operate on different frequencies. "We use FM frequencies and radio amateurs use AM frequencies, which allow their broadcasts to bounce off the ionosphere and, as a result, travel farther," said Gene Ostrander, chief dispatcher for the state/county fire departments.

Flake said the volunteers need no special license to
(Continued next page)

participate in the CDF program.

"They are already licensed by the FCC," Flake said. "It's not easy to get an Amateur Radio operator's license. They are skilled people. It's not like applying for a CB (citizens band) license, which requires little more than sending in an application."

The volunteers do not get paid for their services, although they are reimbursed for mileage, Flake said.

Leo C. Young Dies; Radio Pioneer

On January 16 the Amateur Radio community lost one of its pioneers with the passing of Leo C. Young of Oxon Hill, Maryland, whose earliest ventures into the wireless art took place in 1905 when he was a boy of 14.

One of the first to be employed at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. when it was opened in 1923, Young continued with the laboratory as a scientist until his retirement in 1967.

While at NRL, he made significant pioneering contributions to radio communications, electronic identification systems and radio control of missiles that influenced U.S. advances in these fields.

In 1930, Young supervised research that produced the first detection of aircraft by reflection of radio signals, and in 1934 was responsible for the research that led to the development of the first system using radio pulses for range determination of stationary and moving objects, thus providing the groundwork for radar developments that profoundly affected the outcome of World War II.

Known to fellow ham operators as W3WV, Young participated in exploration by radio amateurs of the high frequencies for worldwide communications in the early 1920s, continuing as an active amateur until declining health curtailed on-the-air operations during the past two years.

He received the Presidential Certificate of Merit from President Truman in 1946, the Stuart Ballantine Medal of the Franklin Institute in 1957 and the Distinguished Civilian Service Award (the Navy's highest civilian award) in 1958.

A charter member of the Naval Research Laboratory Amateur Radio Club, Young was also a member of the Potomac Valley Radio Club for many years.

He is survived by his wife, Mabel, and two sons, Leo, Jr., and Richard.

—Vic Clark, ARRL Honorary Vice President

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE? Contact Perry Williams, ARRL's Washington Area Coordinator, and arrange for a personal visit by calling (202) 296-9107.

Radio Amateurs To Help State Police In Emergencies

Amateur Radio operators in Connecticut can assist state police with backup communications in emergencies, according to a recent order to all troop commanders.

The order, which was sent from Connecticut State Police headquarters to all field offices, described the systems and capabilities of Amateur Radio and gave troop commanders guidelines for interfacing the radio service with present police procedures.

Troop commanders, the directive said, may meet with local Amateur Radio groups to develop plans for supplementary communications in emergencies and unusual conditions.

The order listed four areas where radio amateurs could be called upon to assist state police: observation of local conditions; point-to-point communications; mobile operations, including four-wheel drive; and portable operations, as in searches for lost persons.

Types of incidents radio amateurs should report are accidents, medical emergencies, incidents involving threats of injury, road conditions, disabled vehicles, and crimes the caller is witnessing.

While Connecticut State Police officials encourage citizen involvement, the order said, Amateur Radio operators should never place themselves in civil or physical jeopardy while assisting the department.

This order is of particular importance in light of recent warnings from CSP Union President Jerry Merskowitz that proposed state budget cuts will severely hamper state troopers' ability to respond, especially to motorists stranded on Connecticut's highways.



Grand Rapids, Michigan's newest and youngest Amateur Radio operator, Emily Woolf, seated, shares her new hobby with classmates at Meadowland Elementary School. Emily, 9, who says she got interested in Amateur Radio after watching her father and mother (both of whom are hams) operating the family ham station, received her Novice license from the FCC just after the first of the year. She says she plans to continue her studies and upgrade her license. photo courtesy Jay Abbott

PROFILE

Jerrold Swank: A Ham With An Ear For Public Service

For the past 60 years, Jerrold A. Swank of Washington Court House, Ohio has been looking for trouble. And he's found plenty of it.

Since the age of 15, when he fell while putting up one of the very first radio antennas and broke several ribs, Swank has been involved with more dangerous situations than he cares to count.

That's because Swank, 75, an Amateur Radio operator for the last six decades, has logged more hours in his hobby than most people do in a professional career — many of them handling emergency communications in some of this century's worst disasters.

In 1969, during Hurricane Camille, which Swank described as the "worst hurricane in the history of the United States," he relayed calls from a ham radio operator named Gerry who was sitting in a Volkswagen in the middle of the hurricane, taking messages from water-soaked victims who came to his car.

"The wind blew out his windshield," Swank remembered, "but Gerry stayed and handled messages for people who came up to his car." Gerry passed them on to Swank who, in turn, passed them on to a ham network especially organized for emergencies.

"We handled over 100 messages that night," Swank said, adding he recalled one in particular that was directed to a soldier who was stationed in Vietnam at the time: "We are all fine, but our house is gone. Love, . . ."

Swank was also the first amateur operator in the U.S. to hear the distress call, "terremoto ayuda!" ("earthquake, help!"), from Guatemala on February 4, 1976.

"I had just finished a conversation with the icebreaker Glacier, which was in the waters off Antarctica, and was making contact with a ham in Mexico when I heard the call," Swank said.

"There's been an earthquake," the call said. "Thousands killed. Notify the Red Cross."

After receiving the message, Swank said he contacted the Red Cross who initially replied, "It's probably a drill." But a quick check with a telephone operator in Guatemala City convinced Red Cross officials it was the real thing.



Allan Kain photo

"My only reason for being a ham is public service."

A retired business consultant, Swank also was instrumental in aiding local communications during the Blizzard of '78, which virtually "closed" every state in its path. At the time, Swank was a communications officer for a local disaster services agency.

"The response was immediate and exciting," Swank recalled. "Twenty-six amateurs checked in and offered to do whatever I wanted them to do."

Their first function when the blizzard struck, Swank said, was to supply emergency communications because telephone lines were nearly unusable because of the heavy volume of calls being made by area residents.

Through hams arrangements were made to get food, clothing and medical supplies to the more than 1000 travelers who were

stranded in Washington Court House. Area ham operators also relayed hundreds of messages from residents to surrounding cities during the blizzard.

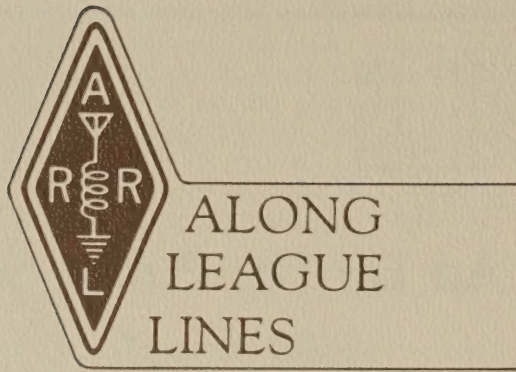
"Amateur Radio is something not many people really understand," said Swank. "My only reason for being a ham radio operator is for public service."

Not all of Swank's adventures had the benefit of distance — or a radio — to separate him from the actual disaster. About eight years ago Swank got the shock of his life when an antenna he was taking down fell across a 7200 volt electric line — enough to kill almost anyone.

"I felt like a light bulb, and I hurt all over," the veteran ham operator recalled.

Swank said three things immediately crossed his mind as he held the antenna, unable to let go: "First, I thought what a stupid way to die. Second, a feeling of sadness came over me as I thought of all the trouble I was causing my wife. And third, I thought that now I will find out if it is true that you cannot let go of a live wire."

Later, at the hospital, the only sign of the accident that remained was a row of little holes along the edges of Swank's now-itching feet. That incident was one of the few times in his many years as an Amateur Radio operator that Swank has been on the receiving, instead of the giving, end of emergency aid.



From the very beginnings of Amateur Radio, with the first experiments of Marconi and other "amateurs," finding new and more efficient ways to communicate by radio has been a trademark of the international radio avocation.

And so it is with enthusiasm that the amateur community views FCC's recent decision to allow the Amateur Radio Research and Development Corporation (AMRAD) in Washington to experiment with a new type of amateur teleprinter code, one similar to the commercially used "Moore ARQ Code." This code, its experimenters say, could pave the way for an error-free means of sending radio signals.

But aside from fostering the possible development of a more efficient communications mode, this latest action by FCC, and several similar ones in recent months, signal a willingness on that agency's part to take a more active

role in encouraging the technical growth of radio communications.

Such a shift, should it survive the impending administrative changes due that agency, could have many advantages.

The most obvious plus would be a strengthening of ties between FCC and the amateur community, both of whom are bound by charter to advancing the state of radio art.

Furthermore, by encouraging amateur experimentation, FCC is in the position to maintain the Amateur Radio Service as a viable proving ground for innovative radio communications research and development. Let us not forget that it is amateur experimenters who have had a hand in many radio firsts — such as the use of short waves, techniques to reduce interference so that greater use can be made of the radio spectrum, satellite communications — many of which were later adapted by government and commercial interests.

By continuing to be receptive to amateurs' requests to experiment beyond the limits of existing regulations, FCC can assume a more helpful role in its capacity as a regulatory agency. In this way, also, FCC can serve its constituency by helping to cultivate the pioneer spirit which is an inherent and vital part of the amateur character.



American Radio Relay League, Inc.

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Harry J. Dannals
President

Richard L. Baldwin
General Manager

Andrew J. Tripp
Editor